

# ***BODY AND MIND INTEGRATION***

## ***Movement As One of the Many Bridges***

We are entering an era in which physical health and psychological well-being are seen as synonymous. Neuroscientist Karl Pribram estimates that ninety percent of the activity of the brain is preoccupied with movement. If that is true, then when we improve the way we move, we are improving the way the brain functions.

Changes in the way we move are changes in the nervous system, which are observable as changes in the skeletal muscles' responses. The skeletal muscles complete the external picture of an internal emotion in facial expressions, body posture, and in acture. Since an emotion has both physical and mental qualities, if we change one, we change the other. In other words, if we change the skeletal muscles' responses (the way we move), we change the way we sense, feel, and think. Thinking, feeling, sensing, and moving are inseparable. We can change the recurrent thought of being anxious by changing our acture: with practice, we can apply that knowledge while anxious. Some psychotherapy's recognize this fact, and have the client move, or perhaps change their position in the room, while discussing their difficulties. Even small eye movements are recognized as instrumental in promoting psychological change.

Skeletal muscles' responses can be consciously controlled, and are easier to change than any of the other responses to an emotion. Try to change the other parameters of your emotions (your visceral, neurological, and immune response), and see how easy it is. Try to stop sweating when you are tense and upset. Try to change the way you think about someone, or a situation you dislike, and see how complicated that is. Try to change the feeling of disappointment when someone hurts you emotionally. But changing the way you move is relatively easy. Additionally, skeletal muscles' responses are externally verifiable. Anyone can see when you move differently. An observer has clues, but no direct way of knowing if you have changed the way you feel or think. But changing the skeletal muscles' response, that is, the way you move is easily verifiable.

Most often, the change in the skeletal muscles' response is a decrease in muscle tonus (tightness). With the muscular tension reduced, it is easier to move, so we produce less wear and tear on our body, and it is easier to sense our emotional state and to be more available to our intuition. To quote Antonio R. Damasio:

***The action of biological drives, body states, and emotions may be an indispensable foundation for rationality. ... Rationality and intuition are... shaped and modulated by body signals.*** ("Descartes' Error." p200)

Changing the way you move is not the only change necessary in learning to be more creative and emotionally healthy. It is, however, a fundamental change. A few of the simplest shifts to notice when people are relying on their intuition, (their internal guidance system) is they smile more, stand more erect, hold their head up, and are more spontaneous in their actions.